FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XXI, Number 6, December 1970

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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PRAYER

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

The Serenity Prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous

E D I T O R I A L

Some of my close friends are astonished (or mystified) when they find out that I'm a football "nut." (Editorially speaking, I would prefer "buff" or "fan," I think.)

Mea culpa. I confess, every Saturday afternoon I add one more "football widow" to an ever-growing number as I follow the gridiron fortunes of Colts and Chiefs and Cowboys. (My own football widow is good-natured about it, feeling perhaps that I need *some* kind of relaxation—or else that it's a good way of keeping me out of mischief!)

But my friends (except for fellow football nuts) tend not to be, I've noticed. From their reactions, I can tell that they feel their perceptions have been indicted, almost as if this new information, previously unsuspected, unimaginable even, was an outright assault on their sensibilities and a betrayal of their personal classification systems. (Classification systems, if you haven't decided for yourself, are invariably reflexive.)

Well, what can I tell them? I like football, that's all. (So what else is new?) At the same time, I understand the reaction. We all tend, in this busy, practical technological world, to do too much classifying, pigeon-holing, categorizing. This noetic by-the-numbers habit of looking at the world is bred in us too early not to deny its force. It has a double virtue, in fact: It allows us to be "hard-headed" and "rational" on the one hand, and lazy on the other. To wit: So-and-so is a phywixis. How do we know? Well, phywixises are such-and-such, that's why. And we are spared any thought. Should we find a phywixis that happens to like Latin poetry or sky-diving or toasted marshmallows or the history of cattle-branding, we promote him automatically to "pariah" first-

class. Because we've yielded to the easy generalization. Because we've let the definition salt the "evidence" instead of letting the definition (i.e., the person) emerge from the "facts" —*all* of them. Why, this phywixis has destroyed our image of him; and *that* will never do.

The difficult thing to explain to my non-football friends is that, except for two or three sentimental identifications, I'm not even interested in football or the teams *per se*. What I'm interested in is *the game*—the ritual, faith and myth, the art. A moveable chess where a Johnny Unitas is the awe-inspiring grandmaster. A configural choreography of strategy, teamwork, tactics, and imagination (and muscles) in which an O. J. Simpson's *pas de deux* involves a straight-arm. The poetry of fate—as when a game turns on some penalty, some fluke, something inexplicable and unforeseen, like the soul's changing direction and catalyzing the action. Very much like life itself—not a symbol of life (which it very well can be) but an analogue of life, played out on this 100-yard simulacram of grass and stripes and pigskin. Simple. It is prayer and process and heroics being midwifed into existence, a Greek tragedy which, if we could but let it, might show us still another way to grow, mature, contribute, become civilized.

(You get *that* out of football? Why not?) There was that Buddhist divine who said that the whole universe could be discovered in a peach pit. The quarterback who elects to quick-kick on third-and-nine with five or six behemoths red-dogging discovers it more quickly, that's all.

—J.W.

THREE MORE EXPERIENCES OF PRAYER

In response to the Fellowship's call for volunteers, fifty-some individuals in the USA and Canada have been praying and keeping detailed records of their prayers since June 1. Two extracts were published in the October issue, A's and B's. Here are three more.

B's EXPERIENCES (Continued)

September 23, 1970

My efforts in the Fellowship prayer study are proceeding in a rather uneven manner. The changes in world events affect my feelings of success (or failure) more than I would like. The erupting truce in the Mid-East is one example. At its start I could sense a brightness at my prayers' end. When violence occurs I cannot seem to feel the light.

To overcome this frustration (?) I try to read of positive peace results, past and present. I am also devoting more thought and prayer to people peace; as opposed to peace between nations. Again, flareups in our country and elsewhere seem to keep the darkness in my prayers. I don't know why!

Still the occasional breakthroughs are a big plus. If at night sleep gives real rest; if in the morning, the day seems special.

In spite of my many seeming failures I am certain our Lord hears my prayers. His answers are given—but in his way and not our way.

Would like to ask one question. Do any other participants feel this sense of failure?

C's EXPERIENCES

August 19, 1970

One big idea has been evolving this month from my reading and prayer life. The idea is that it is *relationships* that give overwhelming meaning to life. It is these relationships that hold our world together, and in which we find the true meaning of our own existence. The following quotation from *The Pursuit of Meaning* by Joseph B. Fabry gave me a new symbol and set me to thinking:

"Existential philosophers have drawn Man's attention to the I-THOU relationship between individuals and suggested that the relevance of existence lies neither in the *I*, nor in the *THOU*, but in the hyphen between them"

That hyphen looks so small, but it is what makes the connection between persons and between God and me. So it leads to questions:

1. HOW can I strengthen and deepen these relationships?

2. HOW can I make new relationships and get to know people as they really are? (This makes me alert in every contact, wondering if I can reach out—if this is to be a hyphen relationship.)

3. It makes me realize that my I-THOU relationship with God comes first and must be constant. How very simply Jesus taught this in the allegory of the vine and the branches. And how simple and all-inclusive was his statement of relationships:

"You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind and all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

a. He puts the relationship with God first and has it include every area of my being. *Love* includes all spiritual outpourings.

b. My neighbor includes everyone in my life that is in need, and this can be an ever-broadening circle for me.

c. Myself—means self-respect, giving myself time, and forgiving myself for mistakes.

So today and for many days I go on with the modern symbol of relationships, making each one more meaningful, seeking to refrain from irritations and criticisms, that spoil even for a short time these relationships, and putting into daily contacts more of appreciation, sympathy, empathy and love that builds up the other person.

HYPHEN adventures await every Christian every day.

(P.S. I wrote this yesterday, and this morning I saw my hyphen as a bridge with much cargo going both ways. I thought of all the kinds of cargo I wanted to send across.)

A second idea that comes to me as I delve into psychology, logotherapy, philosophy, and Christian writings, is that no one has said it so well as Jesus. He could say so much in a single phrase what these modern writers take pages and pages to explain. The Holy Spirit which Jesus promised takes these words of his, and applies and expands them even as Jesus predicted. "The Holy Spirit will glorify me for he will take what is mine, and declare it to you" (John 17: 14).

I doubt if humanity ever finds greater *truth*, or a better *way* of *life* than Jesus taught. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." I believe that, more and more.

D's EXPERIENCES

To grasp more fully the true dimension of prayer in my life I must turn to my time spent in the High Sierra each year. To discover the depth of my relationship with God I find that it is important for me to evaluate these periods of meditation in the heart of the mountains. It is there I find the real relationship of man with his universe on the top of the mountain, and come to know a mystic communion with the Divine Presence.

It has been a revelation to encounter three different aspects prayer analagous to my mountain trips.

I have first entered into prayer somewhat in the manner in which I climb mountains. My usual journey starting from the deep valley and climbing up an arduous trail to the summit, where I become fully aware of a great feeling of closeness to the Infinite. This earnest and sometimes painful prayer seems to be filled with as many spiritual obstacles to my soul-journey as the physical problems which beset the actual mountain trail. The mountain-peak sojourns have been experiences difficult to put into words partly because the effort was so great to reach the summit. Although I have gloried in these physical and spiritual ordeals because the summit meetings with the God-Consciousness have been profoundly moving, I have wondered if these mountain-top nirvanas could be reached by some other way.

I embarked upon a different type of journey to the highest elevation when we took the gondola ride on the ski-lift. We were

able at this level to see the entire vista of the vast unlimited distance, the sharpness of perspective, and the affinity between earth and sky. Yet we kept our feet firmly on the mountain top enjoying all of this and being lifted up to this height through no effort of our own. Prayer can be like that strong cable which was fastened to us and drawing us upward effortlessly and steadily to obtain a new view on the summit. This can come about by constant renewing of our life-source with the Infinite Life to which we are attuned, through our everyday devotions acting in an upward motion just like the cable line which carried us up the mountain to the top.

However there was yet another experience which was overpowering in its significance to me, when I became fully conscious of its relationship to my prayer dimension. I was given the opportunity of taking my first plane-trip this summer. Although I had visualized in my mind for years how it would be, and was satisfied when I did go up that it was actually as I had imagined, it awakened in me something wondrous and profound. The power of prayer had acted in my life exactly like going up in the jet plane. It was a matter of seconds when I was lifted high into space, suspended freely above the mountain peaks by an invisible power. This is the manner in which I have been lifted by prayer when the supplication was made from the sincerest and deepest Faith, and most intense outpouring of my soul. It was as though the mighty hand of God swept my soul into the realm of eternity where there was perfect serenity and assurance of the answer to my inner petitions, and complete awareness of God's presence.

●

These three dimensions of prayer have all taken place at various periods in my life. It would be difficult to ascertain which phase has provided me with the greatest insight into the

heart of God. I find that I react to each situation with a different phase of my prayer life. I can however rest assured that I am always drawn into the dimension which brings the ultimate fulfillment of my spiritual needs by an all-wise and loving Father. I know the Christ-consciousness guides me every day in the path of prayer to the mountain top of my soul. . . .

A CHAIN REACTION

Antoinette Daria

We went to visit, to have a nice time, with a few friends. There was much relaxing conversation and a few good laughs. Everyone seemed happy.

Suddenly, one of the crowd said, "How do you like what so-and-so said or did?" Before you knew it, the missing person was taken apart, all defects showing.

A smile is contagious, but so is criticism.

I tried to stop this conversation by telling them of a sermon which a priest had given. He showed the congregation a piece of paper with a black dot on it, then pointed to several people in the church, and asked them what they saw. They all said "a black dot." Suddenly a woman said, "I see a white paper with a black dot."

This was the answer the priest had been waiting for.

We see people with an eye on their faults. Perhaps it is prominent, but we tend *not* to notice when they do something *good*; yet *everyone* has good points or virtues as well as faults.

God says: "Judge not that you may not be judged."

CHRISTMAS POEM

A small shopwindow seen today
Has a placard on display
Saying 'Love is here to stay.'
Would anyone such words gainsay?

Concinamus hodie!

Not so very long ago
The motto might have read
'God is dead.' But instead,
Triumphantly alive today,
God prov'd it wasn't so.
No. 'Love is here to stay.'

Concinamus hodie!

So once again we celebrate,
And consecrate, and venerate,
The night God gave his infant son—
The Daystar, the Holy One—
Whose banner, brought from heav'n above,
Bore but one word. The word was Love.

He was often turn'd away,
To hate and ignorance a prey;
But now they say He's here today
In very truth, and here to stay.

Concinamus hodie!

Love was by the Lord ordain'd;
Hate has gone astray.
Love returns unharm'd, unstain'd;

'Love is here to stay.'
Could one interdict the Lord?
Could one countermand The Word?
Could one ignore a Holy Baby?
Well. Who knows? One wonders. Maybe.
But surely not on Christmas Day,
When round the world the placards say
'Love is here, and here to stay.'

Concinamus hodie!

—R. T.

(Courtesy of Mrs. Samuel Chamberlain)

WORDS

Carol M. Mandola

Is there anything. . .
so beautiful as the music of words
which whisper and linger in the heart,
as daylight shadows fall,
like a penance of grief or sudden joy,
each syllable baptized with memory?

PEACE

Mildred Long

Another day I awoke with a sudden start and a fearful mind and I cried,

"Oh soul, where is peace? Have I lost it, or is it only hidden by some transient cloud? Tell me quickly how shall it be restored to my anxious heart?"

And listening I heard the Voice say:

Peace is one of God's choicest gifts.
It rides on the wings of the storm.

It is like the calm that follows the ocean swells, the refreshing loveliness after the rain, the quiet center of the whirlwind where is no fear or movement.

It nestles in the heart like the deep places of the ocean, serene and unruffled by the storms that trouble the surface.

But more than that it permeates the whole atmosphere of the heart and vitalizes its very breath, even as the air fills our lungs and sends life-giving oxygen through our bodies.

This peace abides through the day or night.

By day it radiates courage and warmth even as the sun sends out its strengthening beams.

By night it lies like a canopy over our heads, a protection wide and deep, even as the sky lies above us calm and infinite.

God's peace is like the breath of Spring, the comfort of a mother's arms, the wonder in a baby's eyes, the steadfastness of the mountain peak.

But peace abides only where God's spirit controls.

When its life is threatened, we know that human desires have superseded the divine Presence and will.

Then we must fix our eyes again upon God within and rest in Him.

For peace is the gift of God only to those whose lives are lost in Him.

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

"And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

"The peace of God which passeth all understanding" is for those who have learned to pray and to live according to God's will and plan.

FLIGHT

Lillian Hammer

Birds hovering
In restless flight,
A silence
In the air.

WIND

Helen G. Jefferson

With fumbling fingers
we loosen latches, open doors,
Cleansing wind enters.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Reuben L. Musey

The man and his young wife looked no different from all the other people coming into the city on donkeys late that night. Except, perhaps, that the woman was expecting a child. A light snow was falling behind them in the hills. The city was crowded with people, complying with the Emperor's edict to be there.

In Biblical days, it took Mary and Joseph five days to travel the ninety miles between Nazareth and Bethlehem. Why would a woman advanced in pregnancy be traveling such a distance? It was because Emperor Caesar Augustus had ordered a census. All Roman subjects from the Rhine to the Jordan had to return to the cities of their fathers to be counted. Taxes would be levied after the count. Even the lame and the blind had to make the journey.

Joseph, a descendant of David, had to return with Mary to Bethlehem, the city of David's birth. In this way the ancient prophecy was fulfilled: "Bethlehem, Ephrata...out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." Joseph had not realized that so many belonged to the House of David until he and Mary had reached the inn. Every field, every house, was filled with people—some lay down in the valley amid the dozing sheep. The innkeeper's wife suggested the man take his wife to the cave below, the cave where the animals were kept. At least there, they would have some privacy, however humble.

Before Jesus' birth, Joseph prayed, and when he looked up toward the east, he saw a strange thing. Over the Mountains of Moab, three stars fused into one huge, bright star. At that moment, the Infant gave His first cry.

The huge star was so bright that it split the dark sky with light, awakening the shepherds who lived in the hills. In terror, the herders listened to the words of an angel who floated over the valley:

"Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

So the shepherds, too overjoyed and excited to delegate someone to watch their herds, followed the star to the city. There they asked, "Where can the Messiah be found?" Finally, they tried the inn, whose keeper remembered the man and his wife lodging in the stable.

On timid feet, the shepherds approached. They knelt before the manger, murmuring prayers, piously clasping their hands before their chests. Then they left, praising God for the wondrous event.

SIERRA NOCTURNE

Zelma S. Dennis

A fever of stars
Consumed my soul in the night.
With the dawn, strange calm.

THE SADDEST THING ON EARTH

Howard G. Hanson

The saddest thing on earth is joy
without its fellow, pain—
it leaves no height to fly, no buoy
to mark what depths remain;

my dignity as man requires
a span a cosmos wide
to flail my harvest, mount my fires,
and step my God beside!

JET SIGHT

Emily Sargent Councilman

So fast
it trails a stream
of smoke already past
a quarter-sky of space—my world's
new realm!

(A man
of skill, tool-winged,
can dare the soundless span
where beckon vast uncharted spheres
beyond.)

THE SEEKER

K. B. Sitaramayya

Pictures of peaks begin to speak to me.
The trivial things tremble in my heart.
Vast forms haunt my feeble mind.
I feel it strange; and I forget my part.
I sing of the rose of the snowy dawns,
prudence prompts the prose I should speak.
Prize boys proudly push me off their stage.
I gladly turn to that I should seek.

A near
half-world away,
huddled humankind dare
not look up when probing wings invade
their blue.

(O God,
scorch me with their
fear. . , lash me with their rod. . .
reach me the torment of all men's
despair.)

AS PANTETH YET THE HEART

Viola Jacobson Berg

When tears encompass me,
When hollow is my praise,
When breath is vanity,
And friendless are my days,
How longs my weary soul for purity, for sun.

Speak, move
act in peace,
as if you
were
in prayer.
In truth this
is prayer.

-Fenelon

(Courtesy of Velta Myrle Allen)

THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

Velta Myrle Allen

I kneel in humbleness before thee, God,
As Shepherds did long years ago.
They brought rare gifts of frankincense and myrrh...
Of gold held in their roughened hands.
I sense the joy that must have filled their hearts
When they first heard the angels sing,
Proclaiming Him as Saviour, Prince of Peace,
Deliverer from evil's power.

I sense travail of spirit as Mary did
When Her Beloved Son was hung
Upon the rugged cross, and I believe
As did the prisoners by His side
That He forgave and promised each of them
A home in Paradise. The night was dark,
But morning brought a new awakening
In every heart. HE paid the price!

This Christmas time I kneel in humbleness
With gratitude that overflows
To drench my soul with vows to consecrate
This peace on earth that He bequeathed.

Peace on Earth

I shall pass through
this world but once.
If therefore,
there be any kindness
I can show,
or any good thing
I can do,
let me do it now;
let me not defer it
or neglect it,
for I shall not pass
this way again.

TO YOU I OFFER

Marjorie Martin

Child new born, King of Kings
To you I offer costly things,
No frankincence, myrrh or gold
Only a silent prayer I unfold,
For peace on earth, good will to men
In brotherhood we rejoice again.

MEDITATION

Helen M. Margalith

We look into the mountains and encounter Thy transcendence. We look beyond the stars and embrace Thy immanence, for we have found Thee.

All of nature points to the eternal echoes of God's commands. The heights and depths of the human soul share in the wisdom of creation's cries. No man is plain or ordinary. Each bears the imprint of his own uniqueness.

Countless are the words addressed unto our creative God. Often do we wonder whether they really count. Yea, wonder is the beginning of a knowledge which encompasses all knowledge, and reverent reflection carries its own response. Thou art near when we bring Thee near. Thou art far away when we confine Thee to a distant and formless future,

As we stretch forth compassionate hands to one who has become alienated; as we look upon the disenchanted, the distressed, with the eyes of tender empathy; as we take to our hearts the enraged and embittered, we feel the radiance of Thy smile. Concerned and consecrated action enables us to be Thy partner, for we become instruments of love's tranquility.

We look unto the mountains and encounter Thy transcendence. We look beyond the stars and embrace Thy immanence, for we have found Thee.

LIVING WORDS

"Our Father, Who Art In Heaven"

Eleanore-Melissa

What does the word *God* mean to you? A Great Force or Power which runs the universe? But remains impossible for mortals to visualize?

I like the warm closeness of God as "Our Father," an ever-present refuge, a comforter, a companion.

When the worldly ills seem almost too much to bear, I think of His hands extended to us bringing Peace and renewal.

In the palm of God's hand
I rest secure.
Through Him I gain
The strength to endure
Whatever life shall
Have in store.
His Love is with me
Evermore.

That possesive pronoun is important, too: "Our Father." Not a personal, private god, but a Father whose hands are stretched out to each of His children alike. And His being "Our Father" makes us one vast family, brothers and sisters all. Through Him we should be able to find *the way* to live in peace together.

HELP ME TO FIND IT, LORD

Emma S. McLaughlin

Beaten and bruised by the world
I search for peace.

Let me know peace, Lord—
the peace of the mountain top
brushed by the wings of eagles,
sweet with the scent of pines,
drowsing at night beneath a shawl of stars.
Let me regain perspective from the long view
that heals the body and restores the mind.

But do not indulge me, Lord,
lest I, sedated, fall into a way
completely lacking in a sense of mission.
Push me off the mountain, Lord,
down into the crowded place below;
there I will meet peace in a different guise—
for there, in poverty and stress,
in ugliness of passion and disease,
man meets his brother,
learns to share his love
and finds, at last, a peace within the heart.

Help me to find it, Lord—
The peace that passeth understanding.

THE DIVINE VISION OF MAN

C. Jinarajadasa

What happens to me when I love my friend? A great joy indeed, but more than that. He releases in me a capacity of love and tenderness, and from the moment that tenderness is released in me I can give it to others also. I, who have thought myself incapable of anything great, of any sacrifice, find that because I love I am capable of a great thing. That great thing was always in me, but I had to await the moment when there came one who knocked, who had the key to the door, and who could release me. The friend is always he who releases hidden capacities in another.

There are some whom we cannot love with the intimate tenderness we give to the friend. These, it may be, we merely admire; yet what is the admiration which we give to a hero but a discovery of a heroic capacity within ourselves? When I admire a hero, and my heart is thrilled at his great act of sacrifice, it is a way of discovering in myself the power to be a hero. . . . When we go into the picture galleries and admire the great artists, what is happening? We discover something of the nature of beauty which is within us. It is because the beautiful is awakened within us that we reverence it as it is presented to us. . . When in a great hall, year after year, the message of music is given, and tens of thousands hear and feel enraptured, what is the mystery that is being performed? Is it only that Beethoven is speaking of the greatness of life as he knows it? It is far more; he is calling out the greatness of life in each one of his hearers; he is releasing the hidden musician in all those who throng to listen to his wondrous music.

That is one meaning of life. Life is constantly releasing us. And so we look around and see our friends, each friend releases in us the capacity of divine life. The hero releases within us an endurance that is divine; the artist releases in us a beauty that dwells within us and is divine. All the time, by interchange of thought and feeling, by the interplay of hidden forces from man to man, each one of us becomes released, and slowly our mortal self is laid aside, and we discover something of our hidden immortal nature.

When he who is seeking the divine vision has come thus far, and feels that every man has to him some kind of a message, when he has those "other larger eyes" with which to gaze at men, then it is that there dawns on him, as a part of the divine vision, a wonderful scene. It is as if all his life of duty, all his life of tribulation, all that makes the world so full of darkness and gloom, were transformed; it is as if suddenly this world were transformed into a mighty workshop where lives a mighty artist who has made hundreds and thousands of magnificent statues, and this artist takes him by the hand and removes the veil which covers each statue, and shows the great creations of his dreams. It is these great creations which God is fashioning out of us that were called by Plato "archetypes," those fundamental modes of divine thought and feeling which the Divine is trying to manifest through our nature here below.

When we come to the stage of seeing men from the new standpoint, that each has for us a message, then behind each man and each woman we begin to sense and to see this wonder of a divine archetype. Just as a picture gallery shows the great creations of the artist, so all life becomes full of the creations of God, and behind each man you see a great archetype, the primal type of his thought and feeling, through which God is trying to fashion out of frail mortality a divine immortal thing. . . .

And when you have gained the vision—even if only a fleeting vision—of man as seen by God, then as you look into the faces of men sunk in ignorance and sin, weak and failing in a hundred ways, then you begin to see the archetypes behind them all, and your judgment becomes so different from that of men. For then, for the first time, you begin to understand something of the interplay of the good and the evil in man, and you begin to put aside the labels which the world has given, of good and evil, and you begin to see that there is a divine purpose fashioning through a man's good and evil, through his pain and agony, through his glory and renunciation, something not for one life but which shall be for all eternity.

When behind the sinner you can see the archetype, then you can understand why he sins; then you can sympathize with his fall because you know that even as he is falling he is struggling to achieve. . . .

It is this vision of the divine archetypes behind all that is indeed the great message which life teaches you, when you are ready to learn it. For the first time mankind appears to you in a new way. Then, all men, irrespective of race and creed, caste and color, the greatest of mankind as the least, is seen by you as divine. —*from Discovery*

The best way to live is to trust the Lord, to keep peace in one's heart, to accept all things as being for the best, to be patient and good, never to do ill. —Pope John XXIII

(Courtesy of Mrs. B. W. Erler)

THE COUNTRY LIFE

Estelle D. Broadrick

Events and happenings reach out in all directions which may touch people at great distances. Now more than at any other time in history.

In my grandmother's youth, news was slow-traveling. It was carried by "word-of-mouth," from one household to another, from any given gathering place—the country store, the blacksmith's shop, the hitching rail in the town, the one-room meeting-house where revivals and two worship-services a day on Sunday were held.

There were newspapers, of course, perhaps daily ones in the larger cities, and there were weeklies in the small towns, reaching out to include the villages and rural sections. Not every household could afford a newspaper so they were passed around and shared with others.

"Bad news travels fast," they said in those days, and when a death occurred or was imminent, someone saddled a horse or hitched up the buggy to carry the news to members of the family living some distance away.

The newsbearer, of course, related the news to anyone he encountered along the way. They, in turn, passed it on until it was widely circulated.

In those days, family, friends, and neighbors came in droves, to show their sympathy and respect, and they brought gifts of food.

Soon houses spilled over with grieving relatives because they lived too far away to make the trip to the bereaved home and back in one day. They brought their families and stayed, sleeping on blankets spread over the hay in the barn loft, "pallets" on the floor, wherever there was space to spread a featherbed, strawrick, or quilts.

"No news is good news" is a saying they comforted each other with when they were anxious about a loved one at some distance or one who was ill.

A stone tossed into the mirror-like surface of a pond will cause an ever-widening circle of ripples. Events are like that. News was discussed around firesides, over fences, on street corners, in the middle of a dusty road. Some stories gained a bit in the telling, and some lost. Some stories would be elaborated and embroidered as they traveled. Some facts may be forgotten, in time, so that only the bare-bones of the happening is remembered.

My grandmother was a young girl when her father "had the telephone put in." It was called a grapevine phone. Several different homes were connected so that when the phone rang in one, the bell sounded one ring, two, or three in all the others. You knew, and it was not considered unusual, that when your phone rang, all parties connected would lift their receivers at the same time. They wanted to know what was going on, and this was one way of learning.

My grandmother's brother lived to have the newer "improved" telephone installed, but he never outgrew the "grapevine" habit of listening in. He was disappointed when he was put on a two-party line since this cut down on his listening-in pleasure. He preferred the eight-party line. When his neighbor's phone rang, he was as prompt to pick up the phone as the man being called. When he was ill in bed, he would tell his wife, "Lucy, see who is calling Chester, and what they want."

Books were treasured in those days by people who loved to read. They were handled with care and respect, and kept for years and even generations. Of course, there were some who said books were an evil influence. I was warned by my grandmother that I would surely go blind before I was twenty-five because from the age of nine, I read anything and everything I could find. In my grandmother's attic were some old Jesse James novels, a stack of magazines, and two books I loved: one was *Laddie* and one was *Molly-Make-Believe*. These were truly magic carpets to me, and they could whisk me away from the dusty attic to quite another world.

I was reading one day in my aunt's house, when a pious old lady came calling. After gossiping an hour or so, she started to pass me as I read on the porch and snatched the book from my hand, demanding rudely, "Don't you think you should be reading the Bible?"

I was only twelve and not allowed to say that reading, to me, was less sinful than gossiping about one's neighbors, especially when her own children were running wild. Perhaps they could have reached a maturity they did not easily find if they had been encouraged to read.

Times have changed greatly, in some respects for the better but not in all things. Families were mostly close-knit then, and they talked to each other. Understanding was not perfect, of course, because every person then, as now, is an individual, and therefore had views and ways that may have seemed strange and past understanding to others. In this case, they learned tolerance.

Parents, by right of age and wisdom, had the final say. A child was taught that there were rules and laws to be obeyed—or they were punished. Now, children must be allowed to "express themselves," whether that means gathering the neighbor's flowers, or talking aloud in church, or screaming in a department store. They must not be repressed; it could warp their personalities!

Small children were taken to church, and behaved nicely. They tried whimpering and whispering and talking. They were taken outside and spanked. (There wasn't any nursery with attendants and toys to keep them amused.) They learned that there were times when they *had* to be quiet.

These days the opinion seems to be that they must be allowed to express themselves in "harmless ways." Perhaps too much expression can be as harmful as too much repression. . . .

When children are allowed to have all they want, anytime they want, they go on to seek other means of expression: racing another teenager on the highway—against life, inviting death—, taking drugs, breaking into schools, destroying property. It really is not that important that children "express" themselves. In fact, it might be better if they learned there are some things they can't do, some words they are not allowed to say, some patterns of behaviour they must not follow. If there were punishments for broken

rules, perhaps they could learn respect for rules. Broken rules can become broken laws; broken laws can mean broken hearts, and lead to broken lives.

As a nation, as a people, we must progress, we must move forward, but some of the old ways and customs, some of the old established rules, should go along with us. If we discard all of the old ways for new ones, we will suffer gravely.

As a family, my parents, my sister and two brothers and I used to gather around the fireplace in winter and sing. Sometimes during the depression, there was a cupboard almost as bare as Mother Hubbard's and there was a real shortage of money. Dad worked when and where he could, often for a dollar a day. Since a dollar would buy a twenty-four-pound sack of flour, he always said on Monday, "I'm working for a bag of flour."

From a neighbor we borrowed books, and we read them and discussed them. Sometimes we could talk Dad into reading aloud to us. We were taught respect for Dad as "head of the family," and if we did not understand why we could not do something or go somewhere, we were told that he knew best. We were not in the slightest encouraged to make critical remarks. If there was a little rebellion in our hearts and minds, we did not let it show—it usually proved to be a tempest in a teapot, anyway, and the young forget easily.

We learned to accept what we could not change, and made adjustments accordingly. We were taught to pray each night before we went to bed, to entrust tomorrow to the Father of all, Creator of the earth.

In small towns and the rural sections, everyone knows everyone else, their business, and often their secrets. One of the most important men in the community was the country doctor. He came day or night to minister to the sick, comfort the sorrowing, and close the eyes of the dead. He often spent the night beside the bed of a sufferer.

Some churches had their pastors and furnished them a house; some churches were served by a circuit rider who traveled from one community to another, preaching Waycross one Sunday, Cross Plains the next. They were guests in the homes of the farmers and their families. An old country-cured ham was cut in honor of the preacher, if there were hams in the smoke house; if not, almost every household had a few chickens in the back yard which the children were sent out to run down, a frier in the right season or, otherwise, a nice plump hen to be served with dumplings.

One of my grandmother's uncles came in from the fields one day and announced he was "called to preach." The family laughed for it had to be a joke. He was in his thirties but could not read. He knew the farm and farm work and he had never been "very religious." But he was serious: He said he had felt the call, and he was going to serve the Lord.

He learned to read. Someone offered him the school books of the day. He said, "No, I am going to preach the Bible, I will learn to read from the Bible." He did, laboring over the words by lamplight. He learned well and learned something many high school students cannot do today, to pronounce all the difficult names in the Bible.

He was popular, because people felt that if a man could leave his tobacco fields at this age and learn the Bible, he had to be inspired. He never retired; preachers and doctors then worked at their chosen call until life was over. My grandmother quoted Uncle Bill as saying: "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is worthy of the kingdom. Having been called by the Lord, I shall work until the night cometh, or a final call cometh."

NOTICES AND COMMENTS

KATHRYN G. BROWN BACK AT WORK. After two months' recuperation at the home of her family in Spring Valley, N. Y., Kathryn G. Brown returned to work on October 1. Her recovery from major heart surgery was remarkably swift. The Executive Secretary gives credit for this to the prayers offered in her behalf by so many of her friends around the world.

FELLOWSHIP OFFICE RELOCATED. Prior to Miss Brown's return, it was discovered that office space was available in the apartment house where she has lived for twelve years. To facilitate her resumption of her duties, the office was rented—Room 10E, 200 East 36th Street, New York, N. Y. 10016. Many friends have contributed to it (gifts have included new draperies and bookcases and checks for the rent, among other items), and the staff is grateful for all these generosities.

GIVE FIP AS A HOLIDAY GIFT. A year's subscription to the bimonthly publication of the Fellowship will arrive as a welcome and appropriate gift to your family and friends at the holiday season.

NEW TRUSTEES ELECTED. Fellowship in Prayer is happy to announce the unanimous election of three persons to its Board of Trustees:

NELSON BENGSTON, of New York City, has been a World Federalist since that organization was founded in 1946. Since 1948 he has been a non-governmental observer at the United Nations —in behalf of which he has given over 200 lectures. He is a Unitarian, a member of Community Church of New York City. He is treasurer of the International League for the Rights of Man and of Amnesty International of the USA, and chairman of the national executive committee of the Interracial Council for Business Opportunity. "Perhaps," he writes, "I have been spiritually an unknown member of your Fellowship for some time."

MRS. IVAN D. HOUCK, of Lemoyne, Pa., is known to readers of the bi-monthly under the name of Catherine Cabeen Houck. She has been a Contributing Editor since 1968. She began writing poetry some years ago, and her work has appeared in quarterlies, newspapers, and anthologies. She has contributed papers to the Northern Louisiana Historical Association, written a history of her father's ancestry, a book of stories about her childhood in Louisiana, and many articles for the international YMCA magazine (her husband being a YMCA secretary). She is coordinator for a TV program focused on senior citizens. She is a member of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society and of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

REVEREND EMMET J. NORTON, S. J., became Director of the Jesuit Seminary & Mission Bureau in New York City this summer. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1935, studied philosophy at Inisfada and West Baden, taught as a Regent at St. Peter's Prep,

NOTICES AND COMMENTS *(continued)*

NEW ADVISOR. We are also happy to announce that Hubert Elliott has become an Advisor to the Fellowship from the Eastern Zone. He is a public relations specialist in religion and human relations. He chose this service after a career as an editor for newspapers, magazines, and radio. He is an active layman at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in New York City. He is currently Director of News for The Salvation Army's Greater New York public relations department. A native of North Carolina, he is a graduate of Mars Hills College and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. In 1962 he published his best-seller *Bible Words That Guide Me.*

RUTH ANDREWS CRORKIN, of Santa Ana, California, is a native of that state. Poet and writer, she began her career by doing musical features for magazines and newspapers, later did publicity for many prominent musical artists. She has written a lot of poetry of a reflective, religious type. She is also interested in nature and art and young people. She is the widow of Patrick Andrew Crorkin, professional violinist, teacher, and author.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPEAKS. On October 11, Executive Director Paul Griffith went to Croton on Hudson, New York, at the invitation of Mrs. Mari Major and spoke to her group—known as Unity Fellowship—about the Fellowship's history and purpose. Many members attended. They expressed a gratifying interest in FIP's recently published pamphlet about prayer.

and went to Woodstock for theology; he was ordained there in 1948. He spent a year in Belgium and went on to the Gregorian University in Rome for a doctorate in philosophy. For nine years he was professor of philosophy at Plattsburgh, Shrub Oak and St. Peter's College. He was appointed Rector of St. Peter's Prep in 1961. In 1967 he was appointed National Director of Apostleship of Prayer.

NEW CONTRIBUTING EDITOR. We are happy to announce that Emma S. McLaughlin has become a Contributing Editor of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. She is the wife of W. Kenneth McLaughlin and the mother of two grown children. She taught for ten years in church-related day schools and eventually was invited to establish a day kindergarten in her own church, Christ Presbyterian of Allendale, Pa. She has been a member of the faculty of Wilson College Leadership Training School. She is also a member of The World Poetry Society Intercontinental. Her work appears in *Voices International, Poet Lore, Quoin, Poet,* and, of course, Fellowship in Prayer.

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OUR NAME

Rubin Zar

At birth we measure next to nothing,
As from a plant a tiny cutting.
Our crying is without a tear
Even our names we receive here.

When our life's riches end,
We then return to dust, sand.
We abandon all we possess.
Our total earthly success.

We leave our assemblage behind
Including our breath and mind.
However we take with us our name,
Whether with pride or with shame.

"For a world united in prayer"

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